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REACTION TO US FOOD OFFER TO EAST GERMANY AND ITS REJECTION

President Eisenhower's offer of food to East Germany has received generally favorable comment from non-Communist sources, and the Kremlin's rejection of the offer has been criticized. But Communist sources have attacked the offer bitterly, linking it to most of the other lines of attack on US policy in Germany. While the East German press and radio have condemned the offer repeatedly, it has been given much small coverage in other parts of the Orbit.

WESTERN EUROPE

East Germany

Premier Grotewohl's statement rejecting the US food offer set the tone for the editorial comment that has followed. Grotewohl described it as a "provocation serving only propaganda aims." He listed trade agreements with Eastern European countries, particularly the Soviet Union, which make unnecessary any dependence on the US for food. He said that real US help to the German people would include a removal of restrictions on internal German trade, annulment of the Schumann plan and EDC, and agreement to a four-power conference on Germany. The charge was made that the US was neglecting one and one half million unemployed in West Germany.

The East German government took several specific steps to show its intention of providing adequate food supplies. The Berlin radio described large amounts of food arriving from the USSR and other "people's democracies," even including rice from China. The East German food minister promised larger supplies of meat, fish and margarine, while the government announced that farmers could sell surpluses directly in the open market. Nevertheless, an East German paper called the reports of food shortages "vicious slander."

East German writers quoted the American press as proof that the offer is a psychological expedient designed to help Adenauer in the elections and that it

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is a "cynical move to frustrate the policy of peaceful reunification." It is also alleged to be designed to create a rift between the people and government of East Germany. A letter from a meeting of the Democratic Peasants' Party to Grotewohl described the offer as an attempt to set up "hostile agents' centers" in East Germany.

One commentator claimed that American aid always had strings attached to it, and cited 1948 pre-election aid to Italy, the Marshall plan and EDC. East-West trade was suggested as the real solution, with the comment that "like Britain, France and Italy we too want trade, not aid." Another commentator pointed out that the American offer would provide only eighty-five cents worth of food per person.

The sale of milk, fruit and potatoes in relief markets in Berlin was described as an American propaganda trick, and it was claimed by the East Berlin radio that several hundred West Berlin unemployed had protested the sale of these products, which they had long been unable to buy, to East Berliners. Other sources stressed the theme that it was the unemployed West Germans who really needed food.

While the popular reaction to the food offer is not known, some five thousand East Berliners a day did come into the Western sector of the city to take advantage of the relief market set up there. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] work was halted in numerous East German factories for protest meetings attacking the government's rejection of the food offer.

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West Germany

West German papers hailed the food offer and attacked the Soviet rejection in strong terms. A West Berlin paper said, "the last few days showed who feels really responsible for people behind the Iron Curtain." One paper suggested that this was a measure of revenge against the East German workers who struck on 17 June. Another said that the sharpness of the Soviet reaction showed how much the Communist rulers had been hurt by the offer. Most papers suggested that ways must be found to get food shipments through to the people of East Germany.

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Some papers which attacked the Soviet rejection, however, also complained that the US offer was phrased in terms which damaged the Soviet prestige and made its rejection very likely. The Socialist Party charged that the US had bungled its effort to ship food, and should have explored other ways of getting the Soviet leaders to accept the offer. Before the offer was made, some West German sources expressed the fear that it was designed primarily to embarrass the Soviet Union rather than to feed the East Germans.

Austria

The Austrian Soviet-directed radio, RAVAG, said that President Eisenhower has discovered that food can be used not only for nutrition but also as a propaganda weapon. Following a suggestion of West German Chancellor Adenauer, he has sent large amounts of food for use by East Germany. Eisenhower's "generosity" is revealed by a "united press" report saying that the food offer is an effective weapon in the campaign for full utilization of the unrest behind the iron curtain. Fortunately, no one suffers from famine in East Germany. The people would be bad off if they had to wait for American propaganda lard and propaganda beans.

Austria's pro-American commentator, Ostry, said that Molotov's note contained the usual charges which, however, will not fill the bellies of the Germans under Soviet rule. If the Soviet note complains that the United States offer was made in Moscow and not in Pankow, this does not sound very convincing. Anyone knows that the East German government, which has been appointed not by the people but by the occupation power, must consult Moscow before making any decision. Despite the refusal, the food offer stands. Moreover, the East German population will probably receive food allocations which -- though it will not be admitted -- have been brought about by the American offer.

USSR

Soviet papers on 12 July carried without comment the full text of the US letter to Molotov offering food, and Molotov's reply. Molotov said that the offer was unnecessary because Soviet food aid was being supplied and described it as a propaganda maneuver. The failure of the US to consult the East German government was considered offensive to it.

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Soviet papers have since carried dispatches from East Germany describing how well fed the population is. It has pointed out that if the US were really concerned with the interests of the German people, it would end its cold war activities.

Soviet broadcasts to Germany described the \$15,000,000 offer as feeble and claimed that the West German population, which "led a semistarvation existence," had to pay an equivalent amount every two days to US occupation authorities. Real help which the US could offer Germany was described in standard terms -- lifting restrictions on internal trade, ending the Schumann plan and EDC, and instituting four-power talks on the German question.

EASTERN EUROPE

All of the East European Satellites except Albania have mentioned the food offer and its rejection, most of them with comment.

Czechoslovakia

The Czech radio carried Molotov's reply and repeated the Grotewohl demand for free internal trade and an end to EDC. One commentator was concerned with the sad lot of the West Germans, burdened by unemployment and heavy occupation costs, and neglected by the US. He claimed that masses of West Berlin workers are streaming into East Berlin to buy food. In fact, he said, hunger and poverty are reported to be rampant in most of the areas the US is responsible for, including Puerto Rico, South Korea and even the US itself.

Rumania

Rumanian papers published the Molotov and Grotewohl statements. The press suggested that this propaganda maneuver was designed to offset the bad impression of the "collapsed fascist adventure in Berlin," that is the riots. It hailed the rejection of the offer by the East German people, who rely on the friendship and support of the Soviet Union.

Poland

Polish propaganda described the food offer as an attempt to make the world forget the millions the US

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had spent to stir up trouble in Eastern Europe, and the American role in the Berlin provocations. It also raised the question of how much the State Department was spending to spread the Colorado beetle throughout Eastern Germany.

Bulgaria and Hungary

Hungarian papers carried the Molotov and Grotewohl statements, while the official Communist paper in Bulgaria carried the Molotov statement.

OTHER COMMENT

Reports of reaction have not been received from other areas of the world.

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